



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

**All persons and organizations
being in whatever way involved or associated to
children and young persons in Maltese handball**

Date: 20/09/2022

INTRODUCTION

The Malta Handball Association (MHA) and its member clubs are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people who participate in our competitions/events or access our services. Creating a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued, is at the heart of our safeguarding policy which aims to protect children and young people from all forms of harassment, abuse, neglect, violence, or exploitation.

The policy clearly outlines the scope, guiding principles, implementation framework, good practice guidelines, unacceptable practices, as well as reporting and procedures. Throughout this document when reference is made to child/children it is assumed that young people up to the age of 18 are included.

The standards set in this Safeguarding Policy seek to provide a benchmark to support those involved in Maltese handball make informed decisions enabling them to detect and challenge practice that is potentially harmful to children.

Article 1 – SCOPE

- 1.1. This Safeguarding Policy applies to the following, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:
 - 1.1.1. Persons appointed or elected to the management board of the association, council, committees, and sub-committees.
 - 1.1.2. Employees of the MHA.
 - 1.1.3. Affiliated clubs.
 - 1.1.4. National teams' and clubs' coaches and assistant coaches.
 - 1.1.5. National teams' and clubs' support personnel, managers, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sport trainers and/or others.
 - 1.1.6. Referees, delegates, and table officials.
 - 1.1.7. Volunteers involved on behalf of the MHA and affiliated clubs.
 - 1.1.8. Accompanying dependants, parents/guardians, and other family members.
 - 1.1.9. Any other person, including spectators and sponsors.
- 1.2. The above persons are required to comply with this safeguarding policy to ensure that every child and young person associated with Maltese handball are protected.

Article 2 - PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. The MHA and all the clubs commit to respect and support children's rights through sports as highlighted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 2.2. Every child and young person have the right to participate, enjoy and develop personally through handball in a safe, inclusive environment free from all forms of harassment, abuse, neglect, violence, or exploitation whilst in the care of the Malta Handball Association or its affiliated clubs.
- 2.3. Every child and young person have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be free from discrimination whether it is based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation or gender identity, beliefs, religious or political affiliation.
- 2.4. Every child and young person have the right to have their voices heard particularly if raising a concern about their own or another person's welfare. Everyone should know who to ask for help when they have a concern about an individual's behaviour.
- 2.5. Everyone, and particularly those involved in planning or delivering handball programmes for children, whether in schools, clubs, or any sport facility, is responsible for the implementation of children's rights principles, the proper care and protection of children, and always making decisions in their best interests as their welfare is paramount.
- 2.6. Everyone is responsible for the protection of children's physical and mental health. This can be done through the provision of nutritional guidance and guidance on establishing an appropriate and balanced lifestyle.
- 2.7. Everyone has the responsibility to work towards an organisational culture of child safety and ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- 2.8. Everyone has the responsibility to promote and engage in good practice at all levels and in all circumstances, and challenge practice that is harmful to children and young

people that could lead to an environment which is conducive to more serious abuse by setting up a clear and transparent reporting system and related procedures.

Article 3 - IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1. The MHA and its affiliated clubs have equal responsibility to work together to implement this Safeguarding Policy.
- 3.2. It is important to raise awareness of the subject across Maltese handball through education and training, so any concerns are recognised and responded to promptly.
- 3.3. The following explains how this Policy will be implemented and embedded in local handball:
 - 3.3.1. The MHA and its affiliated clubs shall promote best practice throughout the Maltese handball community.
 - 3.3.2. The MHA and its affiliated clubs shall promote physical and mental health and wellbeing of all children associated with Maltese handball. This includes children not being subjected to unsafe, excessive, or unwelcome training regimes, human trafficking, financial abuse or manipulation of their age or nationality.
 - 3.3.3. The MHA and its affiliated clubs shall ensure that a copy of this Policy is available or accessible to all people and organisations to whom this Policy applies.
 - 3.3.4. Everyone associated with Maltese handball shall strive to maintain the principles contained in the appropriate codes of conduct including the MHA Officials' Code of Conduct and the Clubs' Code of Conduct.
 - 3.3.5. The MHA shall ensure that appropriate steps are taken when an individual subject to this Safeguarding Policy fails to live up to its requirements.
 - 3.3.7. The MHA shall update its disciplinary procedures for alleged incidents of harassment, abuse, neglect, violence, or exploitation.
 - 3.3.8. The MHA shall provide access to educational material and training material for its workforce (see Annex 1) as well as direct individuals to appropriate training courses delivered by specialist organisations.
 - 3.3.9. The MHA and its affiliated clubs shall monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of this Safeguarding Policy on a regular basis.

Article 4 - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 4.1. The following guidelines are meant to be the minimum standards of good practice required to create a positive culture and healthy environment for the protection of children and young people:
 - 4.1.1. Make handball fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
 - 4.1.2. Treat all children and young people equally, with respect, dignity, sensitivity, and fairness.
 - 4.1.3. Always put the welfare of each child and young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
 - 4.1.4. Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust and understanding.
 - 4.1.5. Always work in an open environment, wherever possible. Avoid private or unobserved situations.
 - 4.1.6. Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
 - 4.1.7. Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children.
 - 4.1.8. Keep up to date with technical developments and qualifications in handball.
 - 4.1.9. Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
 - 4.1.10. Involve parents/carers wherever possible.
 - 4.1.11. Ensure that boys' and girls' teams are accompanied by a male and female club member or volunteer respectively.
 - 4.1.12. Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
 - 4.1.13. Include children in the decision-making process wherever possible.
 - 4.1.14. Conduct a risk assessment for activities, transport, and accommodation involving children.
 - 4.1.15. Be on the alert for signs of abuse such as unexplained or suspicious injuries for example bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
 - 4.1.16. Be on the alert for unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
 - 4.1.17. Secure parental consent and ensure the appropriate use of information technology and social media (such as email, images, digital cameras, internet)

to make sure that children are not put in danger and made vulnerable to exploitation.

4.1.18. Develop positive ways of managing the behaviour of children that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment and are age and gender appropriate.

Article 5 - UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICE

5.1. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment, abusive behaviour and practices which are deemed totally unacceptable:

5.1.1. Unwanted behaviour, language, gestures, or invitations that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally unacceptable.

5.1.2. Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment or may endanger a child's safety.

5.1.3. Unwanted or unnecessary physical contact including touching, hugging, kissing, patting, and pinching.

5.1.4. Forming intimate emotional, physical, or sexual relationships with children.

5.1.5. Engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.

5.1.6. Engaging in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of the game or competition.

5.1.7. Condescending, patronizing, threatening, or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem.

5.1.8. Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

5.1.9. Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home.

5.1.10. A coach and/or other leader sharing a room alone with a child.

5.1.11. Entering children's bedrooms on trips away from home, unless in an emergency situation, or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, knock and say that you are coming in. The door should remain open, if appropriate.

5.1.12. Allowing children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.

5.1.13. Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.

5.1.14. Sexual assault or physical assault.

Article 6 - REPORTING AND PROCEDURE

- 6.1. If a child or young person raises with you an allegation of child harassment or abusive behaviour as defined in Article 5.1 that relates to them or to another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.
- 6.2. Immediately report any allegation of child harassment or abusive behaviour as defined in Article 5.1 ct, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm, to the
 - 6.2.1. Police Emergency Line (112) and /or
 - 6.2.2. Agenzija Appogg Support line (179). You may need to submit a report to both.
- 6.3. If the incident involved a registered member of the MHA or affiliated club, with the exception of the victim, a report of the incident of harassment and abuse should be sent to the MHA. (see Annex 2: Incident Reporting Form)
- 6.4. The designated persons in the MHA to whom an alleged incident of harassment and abuse may be reported are the President and the Secretary General of the MHA.
- 6.5. The MHA Secretary General shall ensure that such reports are documented. This documentation should include the name, title, address, contact information and signature of the reporting person. The documentation should also include information pertaining to the reasons and basis for the report, including any evidence which might suggest that harassment and abuse has occurred.
- 6.6. Based on the particular facts as detailed in the reports, the MHA Management Board will determine how to proceed with each case based on the best interests of the child.
- 6.7. Any breach of this Safeguarding Policy shall be taken seriously and responded to in line with the legal regulations of the MHA.

Article 7 – NO REPORTING

- 7.1. Any situation where the alleged victim had already attained the age of eighteen (18) years at the moment of the reported act.
- 7.2. Any situation that appears to be already closely and adequately monitored by the respective authorities.
- 7.3. Any situation that manifests significant injuries, behaviours and/or illnesses that are accompanied by a legitimate and reasonable justification.

Article 8 - CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1. All matters pertaining to an alleged incident of harassment and abuse, in particular reports of harassment and abuse, personal information of the concerned persons, other information gathered during investigations and results of investigations shall be regarded as “Confidential Information”.
- 8.2. The MHA shall disclose Confidential Information to appropriate persons or authorities if:
 - 7.2.1. A failure to disclose such information may cause harm to someone; or
 - 7.2.2. Such information relates to a potential criminal act that comes to the attention of the MHA.

Article 9 – DECLARATION

- 9.1. With the signature below the signing club acknowledges that the Safeguarding Policy and the related penalties in case of violations included in the MHA Legal Regulations are understood and confirmed.
- 9.2. The undersigning club confirms that it will pass on and make this Safeguarding Policy available to children, parents/carers, and all relevant parties involved or associated to children and young persons.
- 9.3. The mutual consent regarding this Safeguarding Policy is a basic condition for the participation of a club in any MHA Club competition.

9.4. By signing below, the club affirms having read and agreeing to abide by this Safeguarding Policy.

THE SUBMISSION OF THIS DOCUMENT (ALLTOGETHER TWELVE PAGES)
CONSTITUTES AN INTEGRATED PART OF A VALID REGISTRATION FOR THE MHA
CLUB COMPETITIONS SEASON 2022/2023

Name of Club: _____ **Date:** _____

Club's stamp and signature
(Signature by a person having authority to commit the club):

ANNEX 1: RESOURCES

Documents

- IOC Safeguarding Toolkit
https://olympics.com/athlete365/app/uploads/2020/12/1428_Safeguarding_Toolkit_ENG_23d_screen_Full_2a-.pdf
- MOC Harassment and Abuse Policy
<https://nocmalta.org/resources-for-athletes/harassment-and-abuse-policy/>
- International Safeguards for Children in Sport
<https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/international-safeguards-for-children-in-sport-version-to-view-online.pdf>

Videos

- What is harassment and abuse in sport? IOC Media
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZW1D9SVTOJE>
- How to react when there's Harassment & Abuse? – An Athletes Guide to Safe Sport
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuljFEIwveM>
- What is Child Abuse in Sport? ICOACHKIDS World
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JM29uJGw6ns>

ANNEX 2: INCIDENT REPORT FORM



Your details

Name:

Position/relation to child:

Phone number:

Address:

Email:

Child details

Name:

Date of birth:

Sex:

M

F

Other relevant information about the child: (e.g. mental and physical health)

Parent/guardian/carer details

Name:

Have the child's parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) been informed of the incident?

Phone number:

Yes

No

Email:

Additional Information:

Details of the concerns/allegations

Are you reporting concerns raised by:

Yourself

or

Someone else

If reporting concerns raised by someone else, please provide additional information:

Name:

Position / Related to child

Phone number:

Address:

Email:

Date and time of incident:

Date and time of allegation:

Actions taken to date: (please give details of who else has been informed, and any relevant contact details)

Signed:

Date: